

Arlington Conservation Commission
Minutes
October 2, 2014

Mr. Stevens called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. in the second floor conference room of the Town Hall Annex. Present were Nathaniel Stevens, Susan Chapnick, Janine White, Catherine Garnett, Charles Tirone, Eileen Coleman, Curt Connors, Michael Nonni, Michelle Durocher and David White of the Commission. Also present were Pat Dwyer, Laura Kuhn, David and Lauren Kopans.

7:45pm – Commission Business

DWhite/Chapnick motioned to approve the **9/18/14 minutes** with edits; motion passed unanimously.

A replacement tree has been proposed by **Watermill Place** condominiums for the tree removed along Mill Brook. The tree will be a red maple, which Mr. Nonni agreed would be a proper tree species for that location.

Mr. Stevens recommended that the Commission form **working groups** or subcommittees to improve analysis of issues and continuity of information related to specific recurring areas of Commission business or responsibility. For example, a Symmes group could oversee the conservation restriction for the Symmes property, including compliance with the forest management plan, boundary markers, and liaising with the neighborhood steward's group. Janine White, Catherine Garnett and Michael Nonni have been involved with this site in the past and have volunteered to continue working on this topic. A Waterbodies Assessment working group was also identified as a need. David White, Susan Chapnick and Charles Tirone volunteered for this group.

Cheryl Miller, the **Land Stewards** coordinator, has established a dedicated email address to contact her: Landstewardcoord@gmail.com

8pm **Notice of Intent** - 15 Thesda St addition

As requested, Mr Pat Dwyer appeared before the Commission with a planting restoration plan for plantings that had been removed without permission within the buffer zone of Reeds Brook. A site visit was held September 30 with six members in attendance. After discussion with the applicant, the Commission was satisfied with the preliminary planting plan. Motion to close the hearing was made by Mr. Connors; seconded by Mr. White. Motion unanimously approved.

DWhite/Chapnick moved to approve the plan with conditions; motion passed unanimously. Although the exact positions of the plants were not finalized on the plan, the plant species list was satisfactory, with 73 plants on the planting list. The Commission approved the conceptual plan with three conditions: 1) if a shed is desired by the property owner in the future, as indicated on the drawing, the shed should be no larger than 8' x 10'; 2) the shed must be at least 50 feet from the brook; and 3) the plantings should include at least 90% of

the plants as indicated;

8:15pm **Enforcement** – 2 Princeton Rd

The Enforcement hearing resumed from the prior meeting. Mr. Tirone recused himself from the proceedings. The property owners, David and Lauren Kopans, and their landscape architect, Laura Kuhn, appeared before the Commission for resolution of the enforcement order that arose from extensive, unpermitted pruning of Willows near the banks of Spy Pond. A number of commissioners visited the site in between meetings to examine the level of canopy regrowth to the trees in order to inform whether a mitigation plan should be required by the Commission.

After extensive discussion of the facts and an evaluation of whether any persistent damage was done to the resource area, Coleman/Connors moved to lift the enforcement order. The Commission voted favorably, with Mr. White abstaining. The Conservation administrator, Ms. Beckwith, will issue a letter lifting the enforcement order.

8:30pm **Discussion** – Eagle Scout project, Trevor Brown

Boy Scout, Trevor Brown, met with the Commission to discuss ideas that he has for an Eagle Scout project providing identification signage on Town Conservation lands. Brown proposed alternate sign types; for example, 1 inch pine wood board with stenciled or routed lettering to identify the site name, mounted on two pressure treated posts.

The Commission prioritized the sites that would benefit from a sign. Window on the Mystic, Mt. Gilboa, Meadowbrook Park, and Philemon St were among the sites that were identified. The Commission also discussed sign wording, recommending a minimum of the name of the area and identification as Town of Arlington Conservation Land. Trevor will present a more detailed project proposal with example signs to the Commission in advance of the next Commission meeting.

Commission Business, cont.

The Conservation Commission received complaints from the public at Town Day that there is a locked gate preventing access to **Meadowbrook Park** adjacent to the town cemetery. Ms. Beckwith discussed the problem with Cemetery Commissioner, Michelle Hassler, to understand why the gate was installed. Ms. Hassler described unruly behavior by boaters drinking under the bridge on the brook as well as people parking in the cemetery to access Lower Mystic Lake as the precipitation for the gate. The Conservation Commission opposes restricting access to the conservation land and brainstormed a response. Mr. Stevens will inquire whether the Cemetery Commission can ensure the gate is unlocked during the hours when the public should have access, whether signs can be posted (Arlington Conservation Land; Parking for Cemetery Business Only; No Access To Mystic Lakes), and suggest that the Cemetery Commission call the police for each future incident so as to build a record of the issue.

Mr. White has agreed to discuss the Across Lexington trail signage program at the

Arlington Land Steward meeting to inspire possible adoption of this type of model for Arlington.

The newly formed **Waterbodies Assessment working group** will review the Mass DOT report on impaired waters recently issued in relation to Spy Pond. The report declares significant impairment for a number of reasons including invasive aquatic species, pesticides and other chemical compounds. Working group members will familiarize themselves with the report to see whether any findings in the report should inform actions by the Commission.

The Commission reviewed a revision of a flowchart intended to clarify and outline the Commission's **Enforcement protocol**. The Commission is attempting to codify the progressive steps that should proceed when there are violations of the State Wetlands Protection Act or Town Wetlands Protection Bylaw. The flowchart will include clear timeframes and responsibilities associated with the steps in order to have a consistent and timely process. Ms. Chapnick agreed to incorporate the suggestions made during the meeting and resubmit a second draft to the Commission for further review.

Meeting adjourned at 10:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Durocher
Commission Associate Member